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Shepherd, Thomas James, 1818  
-1898.

Funeral service at the  
interment of George, son of















GEORGE PATTERSON, JR.



G. W. Musgrave

FUNERAL SERVICE

AT THE INTERMENT OF

GEORGE,

George Patterson, Jr.

SON OF

GEORGE AND PRUDENCE A. PATTERSON,

OF

SPRINGFIELD, CARROLL CO., MD.

WHO DIED DECEMBER 21, 1849.

~~~~~  
BY

✓  
THOMAS JAMES SHEPHERD.  
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BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN D. TOY.

1850.



TO

GEORGE PATTERSON, ESQ. AND MRS. PATTERSON,

OF SPRINGFIELD.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

IN complying with your request to furnish for the press a copy of the Funeral Service at the interment of your son, it is proper for me to say, that the Sermon, which formed part of that Service, is in the following pages but imperfectly, although substantially, reproduced. I have

found it impossible, in numerous passages, to recall the precise language employed, having made no written preparation, and being prompted in speaking by the mournful and affecting occasion only; but if, in giving permanent form to the sentiments at that time expressed, I have succeeded in no more than in sketching, truthfully, the character of your noble and now sainted boy, I shall hope both to gain your approval, and to render a not unfitting tribute to that exceeding grace of God in Christ, which bringeth salvation.

With earnest prayer to the Father of  
Mercies, that He would bring you both to  
a blessed re-union with the early lost, and  
the early saved,

I am, most truly, yours,

T. J. SHEPHERD.

LONGWOOD, 26th Jan. 1850.





# FUNERAL SERVICE.



## H Y M N .

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WHEN blooming youth is snatched away  
By Death's resistless hand,  
Our hearts the mournful tribute pay  
That pity must demand.

While pity prompts the rising sigh,  
Oh! may this truth, impressed  
With awful power,—“I too must die!”  
Sink deep in every breast.

Let this vain world engage no more;

Behold the gaping tomb !

It bids us seize the present hour,—

To-morrow Death may come.

Oh ! let us fly—to Jesus fly—

Whose powerful arm can save;

Then shall our hopes ascend on high,

And triumph o'er the grave.

Great God ! thy sovereign grace impart,

With cleansing, healing power;

This only can prepare the heart,

For Death's surprising hour.

## SELECTION OF SCRIPTURES.

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MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.\* All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.† They are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.‡

\* Job, xiv: 1, 2.

† Isaiah, xl: 6.

‡ Ps. xc: 5, 6.

LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.\*

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.† Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.‡

\* Ps. xxxix: 4, 5.

† 1 Tim. vi: 7.

‡ Job, i: 21.

David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?\*

\* 2 Samuel, xii: 16—18.

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.\* Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when

\* 2 Samuel, xii: 19, 20.



the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted, and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.\*

When the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his

\* 2 Samuel, xii: 21—23.

mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.\* So she went and came unto the man of God to Mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her,

\* 2 Kings, iv: 15—22.

Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.\*

Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband, to offer the yearly sacrifice. And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the LORD, and also with men.† And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no

\* 2 Kings, iv: 25, 26.

† 1 Samuel, ii: 18, 19, 26.

open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.\* And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst

\* 1 Samuel, iii: 1—5.

call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.\* And the LORD came, and stood and called as at other

\* 1 Samuel, iii: 6—9.

times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant hearêth.\*

Reuben returned unto the pit; and behold, Joseph was not in the pit: and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not: and I, whither shall I go? And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood: and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.† And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil

\* 1 Samuel, iii: 10.

† Genesis, xxxvii: 29—32.

beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons, and all his daughters, rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted: and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.\*

Behold, Cushite came; and Cushite said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said

\* Genesis, xxxvii: 33—35.

unto Cush, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cush answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!\*

A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.†

\* 2 Samuel, xviii: 31—33.

† Jeremiah, xxxi: 15.



I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.\* For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ

\* 1 Thess. iv: 13—15.

shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.\*

\* 1 Thess. iv: 16—18.

## P R A Y E R .

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ALMIGHTY GOD, Author of our life and of our death, send down upon us Thy Holy Spirit, that, assembled in this house of mourning, we may know our end, and the measure of our days, what it is. Behold, Thou hast made our days as an handbreadth, and our age is as nothing before Thee: verily, at our best state, we are altogether vanity. It is Thou who turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men. It is Thou who

carriest them away as with a flood, who bringest them down to death and to the house appointed for all living. Do Thou teach us, to-day, how frail we are! how slight our hold upon earthly things! how real and solemn the connexion of the present life of sense with the life that is to come! Fill us with thorough repentings on account of our sins; create within us the gracious sentiments of Faith and the holy sympathies of Love; and, by granting us all spiritual fitness for the heavenly state, prepare us for an introduction into Thy presence where is fulness of joy.

And, O most merciful Father, vouchsafe Thy special strength and grace to these

afflicted parents. Thou who gave, hast been pleased to take away, their only son. As Thou alone canst know the bitterness of this affliction, comfort them as Thou alone canst comfort. Enable them to bow in an un murmuring submission to Thy most blessed and most righteous will. Uplift their thoughts and their affections to that Heaven of love and purity in which Thou dwellest, and to which, we are persuaded, Thou hast taken their loved one. Draw them by the cords of love unto Thyself; and, when Thou callest them from Earth, receive them into Heaven, that, in re-union and everlasting intercourse with their dear boy, they may sing the praise of Him who

died for them that they should live together with Him : in whose great name we offer these our prayers, and to whom, with Thee, O Father Almighty, and with Thee, O Spirit of grace, be glory both now and forever. Amen.

## H Y M N .

---

So fades the lovely, blooming flower,—  
Frail, smiling solace of an hour !  
So soon our transient comforts fly,  
And pleasure only blooms to die.

Is there no kind,—no lenient art,  
To heal the anguish of the heart ?  
Spirit of grace ! be ever nigh,  
Thy comforts are not made to die.

Bid gentle patience smile on pain,  
Till dying hope shall live again ;  
Hope wipes the tear from sorrow's eye,  
And Faith points upward to the sky.



## SERMON.

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JOSEPH IS NOT.—Genesis xlii: 36.

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I CAN imagine no affliction more crushing to parental hearts than that of the death of a noble boy. It interrupts so many plans; it darkens so many prospects; it blights so many hopes; it flings such heavy gloom upon one's home and over the sky of one's life; that its intensity of sorrow must surely be extreme.

It was such affliction which wrung from Jacob the brief but pointed exclamation of the text. His son Joseph, a boy of extraordinary promise, had met, as was supposed, a sudden and painful death. From the first wild utterance of grief to that recorded in the text, long years had passed, yet were the father's thoughts still busied with his loss. At every turn he is reminded of it. Among all the objects which address his sight, the form of Joseph is not seen. Among all the sounds which strike his ear, the voice of Joseph is not heard. *Joseph is not.*

It is a like affliction which, to-day, makes this a house of mourning. An only

son, of tender age but possessed of sense and sensibility beyond his years, the pride of his father, the joy of his mother, the light of his home, the Joseph of his family, *is not*. Than this event, there surely could be none more unexpected or more sad. Who thought of it, at any time, as likely to occur? Who associated ever, with the form now cold and still, the damp and darkness of the grave? The face of that noble boy was always so radiant of health and life; his body was so vigorous, so robust; his mind, so active, so intelligent; and withal, his prospective wealth and influence in the world, so real, and so commanding; it had been deemed a violence

to one's most sober thoughts to think of him as soon to die. But *he is not*. That pulseless, that encoffined clay is melancholy proof that Death heeds not the thoughts of mortals. Suddenly, unexpectedly, before indeed we had conceived of it as possible, the young, the loved, *is not*. His place at home and in the house of God, is vacant. His light step follows now no more a father in his walks. His merry shout thrills not again a mother's heart.

How real, how crushing is this affliction, I may not trust myself to speak! God alone, who fashioned the wondrous human heart, can rightly utter that experience of

suffering, to which these grief bowed parents have been brought. Let me rather, on this occasion, by sketching briefly the character of him whom we lament, give to these stricken hearts some comforting persuasion, that their early lost one, resembling the lost son of Jacob in the prime respect of character, resembles him not less in an ensuing and truly splendid destiny.

It can surprise no one who knew the noble boy of whom I speak, that I, who knew him well, ascribe to him a character similar in kind to that of the youthful and pious Joseph. Although no more than five brief summers of his life on earth were

passed,\* he gave no doubtful proof of an earnest, loving, and devout mind. He was in truth an extraordinary boy. The companion of his father from the time he could speak and walk, his intelligence was so rare, and his sentiments upon most subjects so well defined, that the indications of character which he gave, were most distinct and most reliable.

Of these indications I reckon, among the first, *a remarkable love of truth*. He was never known to utter a falsehood, and the utterance of it by others was held by him in especial detestation.

\* At his death he was 5 yrs. 3 mos. 12 ds. old.

He entertained, too, *an exceedingly strong dislike of the mean and of the low*. His opposition to intemperance in eating and in drinking was peculiarly strong. To manifest an undue fondness for the gratifications of appetite, was the sure means of forfeiting his esteem, and, in his last sickness, he resolutely refused a preparation of wine, saying, substantially, I am not a drunkard, nor do I wish to be. Indeed, few things, in one so young, were more surprising than his mastery over appetite. No persuasion could induce him to partake of food, of fruits, or of delicacies, which were declared by his father, whose word with him had always the highest sanction

of authority, to be unwholesome and injurious.

He was particularly free from *that controlling selfishness which most children show.*

With his sister and relatives, and with the servants that attended him, he was accustomed to share what good things he might chance to have, with a readiness and generosity that evinced a noble nature.

Of tender sensibilities he might, from an excess of diffidence, have been regarded by strangers, as irresolute and timid. But *a heart of truer courage never beat in human breast.* Insensible to fear, he maintained what he esteemed the right, with a determined energy of will and manliness of act.



He was distinguished by *strong affections*. The love he bore his parents, and his young and only sister, was intense. He sometimes wept in bitterness, from sudden thought, as he would say in explanation, that these loved ones might be called to die before him and so to leave him all alone on Earth. The singular regard he cherished for his father had a beautiful and uniform expression in countless acts of respect and confidence. The knowledge of his father's sentiments on any subject, or of his father's wishes in any matter, was always quite enough to fix his own opinions, or to decide his conduct. Nor was his love for his mother,

that genuine source and proof of true nobility of character, less deep and earnest. Among the last acts of his life, when Death had evidently touched his sinking frame, he threw his arms about her neck, entreating her forgiveness if, at any time, by any means, he had distressed her.

His *conscientiousness* was, also, most decided. Inquisitive to ascertain the right, he manifested an ingenuous sorrow when he had done the wrong. An unguarded word or some hasty impropriety of temper, has brought him to his mother, weeping, and inquiring anxiously if God would hear his prayer for pardon.

But it was his *interest in divine things* which gave the clearest illustration of a rare nobility of character. The beautiful narratives of Scripture afforded him an unfailing entertainment. He never tired of hearing his mother read these narratives, and would frequently request it, with an importunity that could not be denied. With the history of Samuel, the pious boy and the upright man and judge, he was particularly pleased, and so frequently referred to it, in terms so fitting, as to justify the persuasion that the great truths of religion had taken an effective hold upon his mind. The being and the character of God, were with him topics of

commanding interest. The thought of God seemed to fix itself imperishably in his soul, and to prompt unceasing inquiries respecting the objects and conditions of the divine favor. He plainly had a controlling sense of the divine presence and a strong solicitude to gain the divine approval.

Many proofs of his interest in divine things are remembered now that he is not. It is with tearful joy that we call to mind how frequently he asked what was, and what was not sin; how habitually he endeavored to avoid the wrong; how thoroughly anxieties of soul possessed him when made sensible of wrong which he

had done; and how earnestly he sought, in simple prayers, the forgiveness and the favor of his Heavenly Father. Nor was it a slight proof of his interest in divine things which was furnished by the love he cherished for the house of God, and by the deportment he maintained during the solemnities of worship. He loved the place of prayer. Entering warmly into the feelings and plans of his parents, who were solicitous to have the house, in which they worshipped, finished and furnished in style befitting its sacred uses, he requested, some few weeks before his mortal sickness, that a handsome Bible might be purchased for it. Death came before his request was

complied with ; but the Bible will be purchased, and, in his name, presented to the Church,\* a memorial through many years to come of the love he had for the sanctuary. His place in God's house, if I remember rightly, was never vacant, and his deportment there, truly exemplary. He appeared to realize, more thoroughly than any one so young whom I have known, the sanctity of the place, and the reverent attention which became its hallowed services. And, to this habitual and devout attendance upon divine worship, I attribute much of that solemn sense of an

\* This has now been done.

unseen world of spirit, so remarkably displayed in the closing scenes of life.

From the first of his last sickness he spoke of his decease as of something certain; and, in the midst of endeavors to comfort his parents overwhelmed by the prospect of his removal from them, he addressed himself, with a maturity of thought rarely witnessed, to the great work of preparation for eternity. His expressions of personal sinfulness, of the holiness of God, of the love of Christ, and of the purity and blessedness of Heaven, were uncommonly just and scriptural. He was far from thinking that he should enter Heaven without a fitness for it, and in-

structed in the nature of prayer, he seemed to realize most fully its necessity and worth. Few approached him without an urgent request that they would pray for him; and to his absent minister he sent, to this effect, repeated messages which, alas! were not received until his earnest spirit had returned to God who gave it.\* Many times a day he would recite, with great devotional earnestness, the beautiful

\* It was matter of profound regret that absence from home, during the brief period of the dear boy's mortal sickness, prevented my ministrations at his bedside. I returned only to hear the announcement of his death and to speak in his funeral. The slight allusions in the text to the exercises of his mind, during his sickness, are grounded upon the statements of his parents.

T. J. S.



prayer of our Lord, and add some special, unprompted petitions, that God would show him mercy. And, not unfrequently, when lying still and seemingly unconscious of what around him was passing, his lips would move, and faintly murmured supplications go up to Him who hears and answers prayer. In the utterance of prayer he literally died. The last word caught by those who weeping bent over him, was the sweet word *Father*, which, repeated until his lips grew motionless in death, and, from his manner, evidently addressed to God, is remembered with a touching interest, from his having said to his father, some days before, "You are

not my only father: I have a Father in Heaven.”\*

Such now is a brief sketch of the character of our lost one. How admirable it was, and how closely resembling, in all substantial respects, that of the lost son of Jacob, I scarcely need to say. In truthfulness, in conscientiousness, in strength and depth of affection, and in reverence for God, the leading elements of nobility of character, and the fruit of one infinite and ever-blessed Spirit, the resemblance is

\* The words “I have a Father in Heaven,” form the simple and touching inscription upon the base of a beautiful obelisk marking the spot, in a grove of forest-trees at the north of Springfield House, where his remains now rest.

striking—so striking as to justify, I think, the employment of the known facts of Joseph's history, in illustration and in proof of that high destiny to which, we are persuaded, our lost one has attained.

1. It is a well known fact of Joseph's history that, whilst Jacob was mourning him as dead, he was still alive. It was, indeed, most true that Jacob saw not Joseph, and heard no more the music of his loved son's voice, that from his home its light and joy were forever passed away, yet Joseph was not dead. Nor was the life of Joseph simply prolonged. In that distant land to which the Divine Providence conducted him, he developed the

character of rare nobility which, in early life, he displayed, and reached an exaltation and a glory which he could never have attained in his father's home. Inferior to Pharaoh only in the throne of Egypt, he swayed an imperial sceptre, and was surrounded by a truly regal splendor.

Now, who can fail to note the counterpart to this in the case of our lost one? We speak of that noble boy as *dead*, but who of us knows not that he is *LIVING*? It is, indeed, sad truth that he is not—that he is gone, forever, from the green fields and venerable woods of his earthly home—that we shall see no more his handsome form and expressive face, nor hear

again his shout and call—but it is not truth that he is dead. As the sun which, setting, is not extinguished, but goes to bless some other lands, so he is gone from us. He disappears from this familiar scene to re-appear upon another, higher, nobler sphere. He withdraws from us the sweet, soft light of his lovely character, to shed its kindling lustre upon a brighter world. He is not dead. It were most grievous wrong to that generous, truthful, loving spirit, our lost one's real self, to think of him as dead. He cannot die.

“Dust thou art to dust returning  
Was not spoken of the soul.”

Nor does he merely live. Doubtless, the same high Providence, which conducted the youthful Joseph through trial and disaster to a throne, upheld and led *him* onward through all the gloom of the darkened Valley. And, guided by that Eternal Father whom he revered and sought, whose holy name was latest on his lips, who questions that he now has entered upon the glad activities of Heaven? Yes, at a single bound he reaches the grandest destiny of man—destiny unattainable in time—destiny to which in true magnificence and glory, the royal honors of the son of Jacob, and the whole of Earth's imperial dignities, cannot compare.

What high distinction, what rare blessedness, what satisfying good, what rapturous bliss, are his ! In the very outset of his probationary life of sense, he is exempt from all the contingencies which overlies development of character ; from all the pains of sickness ; from all the anxieties of care ; from all the gusts of passion ; and from all the pangs of remorse. His early and exquisite promise of usefulness and piety becomes, at once, a fixed and a glorious reality. He rises, in a moment, from the scenes and companionships of an earthly home, from the embrace of parents and the kindnesses of friends, from all the plenty of this goodly dwelling, from

yon fair lawn and yonder fertile fields, to the loves, the friendships, and the untold glories of the house not made with hands, the many-mansioned house of his ever-living and ever-loving Father.

“There entertain him all the saints above,  
In solemn troops and sweet societies  
That sing, and singing in their glory move  
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.”

2. It is another well known fact of Joseph's history that the loss of him was made to Jacob an exceeding gain. In that fearful famine which forced the Patriarch to seek in Egypt subsistence for himself



and household, his long lost son became his life. It thus was proven that that event which Jacob mourned so greatly was in truth a signal mercy; that Joseph passed away was more to the mourning father than Joseph could have been abiding in that father's presence; and that God who had already honored Joseph by a rare advancement, designed him the still higher honor of promoting instrumentally his father's good.

Now is there nothing in the case of our lost one analogous to this? Is he whom we lament so absolutely lost that, to these afflicted parents, he may fulfil no ministry of love? Does God design the loved and

lovely child no further honor than that which is involved in personal admission into Heaven? Surely we cannot have such thought. The voice of Scripture and of experience are equally against it. That noble boy though dead yet speaks,\* and, holding to these bereaved ones the peculiar and the unutterably tender relation of a child in Heaven, he becomes to them the fitting minister of God's great mercies.

For, how great the mercy that, uplifted to the home of God, their angel-child relieves them, as well from all anxiety and fear, as from all responsibility, in

\* Hebrews, xi: 4.

respect of his worthy education and ensuing fortunes.

The continuance of his life on Earth would certainly have furnished them most numerous occasions of solicitude. The development of his physical and mental powers, the direction of his tastes, the formation of his habits, the determination of his character, in short, his associations, his aims, his plans and his pursuits, would all have claimed, unceasingly, parental watchfulness and care. Nor with their most assiduous endeavors would they ever have been able to secure him from the sicknesses and sorrows of our mortal state, or to protect him from the trials and the

perils of this probationary scene, or to make it certain that he would so bear these ills and so pass this probation, as to give an increasing brightness to his early promise and a growing satisfaction to their hearts. Thus, the anxiety which they on his account must of necessity have felt, would have mingled also with a natural fear that in strength of body, or in force of intellect, or in rectitude of act, he might fail to realize their high anticipations. And this natural fear, so fraught with dread disquietude, would plainly have been heightened by the manifest, yet most solemn truth, that upon them would lie the chief responsibility of determining

his history, his character and his destiny. Such responsibility attaches by the ordinance of God to the parental office, and of itself is quite enough to fill the conscientious mind with liveliest apprehensions.

What would have been the character and conduct of that dear boy had he attained to manhood, it is now impossible to say. We have much to justify the thought that he would have proven all his parents could desire, yet might the fact far otherwise have been. A failure to mature the principles of wisdom and of virtue is not uncommon. What multitudes of youth convert the beauty of their opening life

into a foul deformity, sinking their own fair prospects into night, and all the love and hope of parents into anguish and despair. And, indeed, when we consider the manifold contingencies which press upon our being in a world of sense and sin, this common failure does not seem surprising. Our probationary life is a conflict with adversaries as many as they are mighty; a voyage upon a sea where hidden rocks, and counter currents, and warring winds abound; a journey along a way filled with innumerable snares, and often pressed by deepest shades of night. Instead of wonder, therefore, that so many absolutely fail to form and to display right character, the

marvel rather is that any of our race escape such failure, and none, in fact, do so escape without the guiding and the guarding grace of God.

Now is it not a mercy that from such disquieting anxieties and fears, from such vast pressure of responsibility, God has freed these parents by uplifting to Himself their child and His? What mercy could be greater? In their acknowledged want of an ability so to govern and instruct their boy, as to ensure his true and noble destiny, the God of infinite resources undertakes the mighty work. In their anticipations for him of the hazards of a changeful world, its pains, its weaknesses, its

days of gloom, its nights of grief, the God of all compassion removes their loved one to a world where such disastrous changes never come. Yea more. In their just dread of his exposure to the delusions of error, to the blandishments of sense, to the fascinations of vice, and to the ensnarements of temptation, the God of an exhaustless grace upbears the object of their solicitude far away from an evil world, and, correcting the unholy tendencies of fallen human nature, places him amid such scenes and in such companionships, that his virtue cannot but be stainless and eternal—in that pure world where “the ransomed of the LORD obtain joy



and gladness, and sorrow and sighing  
flee away.”\*

“He is not dead—the child of their affection—

But gone unto that school .

Where he no longer needs their poor protection,

And Christ himself doth rule.

“In that great cloister’s stillness and seclusion,

By guardian angels led,

Safe from temptation, safe from sin’s pollution,

He lives whom we call dead.”

Oh surely this is mercy which no tongue  
may utter and no mind conceive. God

\* Isaiah, xxxv : 10.

grants these parents every prayer, which for their son they could have framed; and if, indeed, the answer come in form far differing from what their anguished hearts would now dictate, yet is it mercy infinite that God, so early, makes their boy a holy, happy, honored heir of life and glory.

But great as is the mercy thus vouchsafed, it is no less a mercy that their angel-child instructs them now in many of the grandest lessons of our faith.

How impressively he teaches them the unsubstantial nature of all earthly good. He points them to the bed on which they saw him die, to the coffin and the grave in

which they laid him, and he says with an Apostle, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away."\*

Nor less impressive is his teaching that, beyond this life of sense, there is an unending life of spirit. He calls them to look upward to the Heavens, where he has found a world unlike to that of Earth—a world most real, for in it is his home—a world most near, for into it he passed but yesterday—a world most blessed, for "God shall wipe away all tears from

\* 1 Peter, i: 24.

their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.”\* Thus, opening to their faith and their affections an unseen world of spirit, he says again with an Apostle, “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”†

Still more impressive, if it be possible, is his teaching that, for this future, unseen, ever-during world, a preparation is needed. In the pain of his mortal sickness and in the urgency of his prayers for pardon and

\* Revelation, xxi: 4.

† I John, ii: 17.

acceptance, how strikingly he shows the terrific, native heinousness of sin. The poison of inherited depravity must truly be most virulent when one, so young and so engaging, with few if any actual transgressions, and with none of gross enormity, is yet constrained, not only to yield up his life in forfeit to a violated law, but also to entreat, with importunity, the mercy of his heavenly Father. Oh if, before that lovely spirit could ascend to a holy Heaven, it were needful that its native stains of sin be washed away, what cleansing, what washing of regeneration, will they not need who, to an original corruption, have added countless acts of sin, and innumerable

refusals to accept the offered grace of God in Christ! Yes, for a coming world, there is a preparation needed. It is this lesson which the sainted boy pre-eminently teaches, saying, in the words of Him who spake as never man spake, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."\*

Now, let it be observed that these grand lessons, not to speak of others as clearly taught, are connected intimately with all the higher life of the soul. The fleeting world of sense, and the enduring world of

\* John, iii: 5.

spirit, must be properly perceived and duly weighed, before we ever set, as Scripture counsels, our “affection on things above.”\* Nor is it less apparent that he, who seeks to realize the good of the coming world of spirit, must practically own the need of preparation for it, assenting to the doctrine of Sin and of the Saviour with such honest earnestness, that Repentance for the one, and Faith upon the other, shall but reveal the hidden workings of the life of God.

It thus becomes an obvious truth that, to receive instruction in such holy and

\* Colossians, iii: 2.

such vital lessons, although by means of an event as sad as that which here is mourned, is yet a signal and most precious mercy. If such lessons be not learned, the interests of the soul are lost forever. And who can fail to note the singular adaptedness of that bereavement, which these parents have sustained, to give enforcement to the lessons which it teaches? The departure of their boy from time severs at a blow their strongest tie to Earth. The entrance of their loved one into Heaven turns their thoughts and their affections thither, and from that holy home his pure and gentle spirit even now sends back to them the tender admonition, "Be ye also



ready.”\* There, to that world of light, and love, and joy, he beckons them. There he awaits their coming. There stands he ready to receive and welcome them.

Nor is it a slight influence which his memory must have in softening, in subduing, in spiritualizing all their thoughts. In going up to God he leaves behind a thousand recollections, which will bear with blessed power upon their hearts. He will be with them as an angel-presence, in all their journey to the grave. He will sit beside them at the hearth-stone and in the silent chamber. He will attend them

\* Matthew, xxiv: 44.

in the lonely, and in the crowded pathway. He will meet them in the closet and in the house of prayer. He will speak to them in each glad voice of Spring, and in each soft whisper of the Summer wind. His well-remembered tone will mingle with the sound of the falling leaf, and with the roar of the rushing storm. Yes, he will live with them, and with them will converse. Go where they may, do what they may, he will be with them to instruct, to chasten, and to guide their minds.

Thus teaching, thus enforcing, thus opening the heart to heed the lessons of eternal Love, this death may be to these afflicted parents, an essential means of life.

Without it, might they not have cherished such idolatrous attachment to their gifted boy as to imperil fearfully the interests of their souls? Without it, might they not in plans and labors for his prosperous fortunes in the world, have so forgotten God, and Truth, and Heaven, as to sink themselves into the night of an eternal death? But however this may be, we have assurance that the Lord who orders it, "is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."\* This death, for aught that we may say, is God's selected means of bringing these parental hearts, so torn, so troubled, to

\* Isaiah, xxviii : 29.

seek his love and to rely upon his grace and guidance. It is no unmeaning Scripture which declares, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."\* It is God himself who says, "I kill, and I make alive; I wound and I heal."† Oh if from this sore trial, through which now they pass, an issue be designed so gracious and so glorious, as that of their eternal life, then will this trial prove to be the crowning act of God's great mercies.

"Amid their list of blessings infinite

This shall stand foremost that *their hearts have bled.*"

\* Hebrews, xii: 6.

† Deut. xxxii: 39.

3. There is yet another well-known fact of Joseph's history to which, in closing this discourse, I cannot but advert. The mourning Jacob and the long-lost Joseph had, at length, the privilege and joy of a re-union. A series of events as remarkable as those which, at the first, led Joseph into Egypt, thither, also conducted Jacob. The venerable Patriarch beholds again that Joseph who was not and yet who was. Again, he hears the lips long sealed, as he had thought, in death, pronounce his name, and feels the pressure of an embrace unfelt for three-score years.

How must the joy of this re-union have made amends for all the pains of separa-

tion, and, on each review of the eventful past, have filled the pious minds of father and of son, with admiration of the wisdom and the grace of God. The providence, so lately dark and dread, is radiant now with light and love.

Shall, then, these parents come to like re-union with their son? Shall they behold his angel-form, and the surpassing glories of his bright abode? Shall they, by him, be introduced to bands of shining ones, and to the King upon His throne. Oh, shall it be their blest employment to recount, with him, the wondrous steps which led them safely to the skies? To such high questionings, it plainly is not mine

to give a positive response, but sure I am that, if these parents heed the lessons of their dear child's death, "loving not the world, neither the things that are in the world,"\* but "seeking first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,"† a re-union with their sainted boy is as unquestionably certain, as is their, or his, or God's existence. Death may separate, but it can never disunite those loving ones whose hearts are bound together by a common faith in Jesus. Let, then, desire of this re-union, and assurance of its blissful certainty, be all constraining motives to

\* 1 John, ii: 15.

† Matthew, vi: 33.

repentance and to faith, to cordial trust in God and in His Christ. And may “the grace of God that bringeth salvation appear to them, teaching them, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”\* To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

\* Titus, ii : 11—13.



## PRAYER AT THE GRAVE.

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O GOD, we lay this body in the grave that, as Thou ordainest, the dust may return to the Earth as it was. Let thine eye of love be on it; let thy hand of power keep it; and, when Thou callest it to rise from its corruption to an inheritance of incorruption, O unite it to that loving, and, as we believe, now holy mind, which lately dwelt within it.

And we beseech Thee, O Thou Father of all mercies, to impress deeply us who now

surround this opened grave, with fitting thoughts of our mortality and immortality. Lead us, at once, to make the needed preparation for the hour of death and for the day of judgment, and so sanctify to us Thy wise and gracious providences that, as we grow in years, we may also grow in fitness for an eternal dwelling in the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Grant these our prayers for Christ's sake. Amen.

## B E N E D I C T I O N .

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Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.











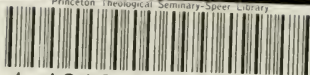








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